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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed Distribution,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Bonavist or Hyacinth Bean (*Dolichos lablab*).

The Bonavist, or hyacinth bean, is an annual, vining, leguminous plant, native of India. It has been grown more or less in Asiatic countries for human food, and to a slight extent for that purpose in Europe and in this country. It is quite commonly grown as an ornamental climber. The habit of all the varieties, of which there are about twenty, is very much more viny than the cowpea, rather intermediate between the cowpea and the velvet bean. Experiments have been carried on for a number of years to determine the value of the Bonavist bean as a forage and green-manure plant, being compared especially with the cowpea. In semiarid regions, rather promising results have been obtained, the Bonavist being somewhat superior to either the cowpea or the soy bean in drought resistance. The possibilities of this bean as a silage crop seem sufficiently promising to continue investigations along this line. The roots are abundantly supplied with large tubercles, thus adding much nitrogen to the soil. Similar to other legumes, the plant is susceptible to both root-knot and to wilt, no varieties as yet having been found resistant to these diseases. One of the principal objections is the poor seeding character of the bean, all field tests with varieties showing a very low yield of seed. At the present time, the Bonavist as a forage plant does not offer any special promise outside of the semiarid regions, for in other parts of the country it will hardly compete with the cowpea as such.

As a green vegetable, the Bonavist has been utilized to some extent in Europe and in this country. The white-seeded, large-podded varieties are the ones generally grown for the green pods, which, sliced or broken and treated as the ordinary snap bean, furnish an excellent vegetable. The green bean when about three-fourths grown has been found to compare favorably with the butter or Lima bean. It is doubtful whether the Bonavist as a vegetable will find a market in this country, but its use in small gardens should be encouraged.

Seeding.—Seed should be planted in rows 3 to 4 feet apart as soon as danger of frost is past in the spring and the ground has become thoroughly warm. Planted in rows from 20 to 25 pounds of seed have been found satisfactory. Cultivation is the same as with any other row crop. Where it is desired to grow the bean as a vegetable, culture should proceed the same as with pole beans.

W. J. MORSE,
Scientific Assistant.

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